

AMITY AND COMMERCE

Exchange of notes at Versailles and Passy August 27 and September 3 and 9, 1784, referring to articles 2 and 3 of treaty of amity and commerce of February 6, 1778

Entered into force September 9, 1784

Treaty declared abrogated by Act of Congress approved July 7, 1798¹

2 Miller 158

The French Minister and Secretary of State to the American Minister

[TRANSLATION]

VERSAILLES

27th August, 1784

SIR:

You have communicated to me an extract from the instructions which Congress addressed to you the 11th May last, which imports that the United States will in no case treat any other nation, with respect to commerce, more advantageously than the French. This disposition is much the wisest, as it will prevent those misunderstandings which might arise from the equivocal terms in which the second article of the Treaty of Amity and Commerce signed 6th February, 1778,² is conceived. But that the resolution of Congress on this subject may be clearly stated, it would be best, Sir, that you furnish me with it in the form of a declaration, or at least in an official note signed by yourself. I have no doubt, Sir, but that you will adopt one of these two forms.

I have the honor to be, etc.,

GRAVIER DE VERGENNES

The American Minister to the French Minister and Secretary of State

PASSY, Sept. 3, 1784

SIR,

I have the Honour to transmit to your Excellency by Order of Congress a Resolution of theirs, dated the 11th of May last, which is in the Words following, Viz,

¹ 1 Stat. 578. See footnote 1, *ante*, p. 763.

² TS 83, *ante*, p. 764.

“Resolved,

“That Doctor Franklin be instructed to express to the Court of France the constant Desire of Congress to meet their Wishes; That these States are about to form a general System of Commerce by Treaties with other Nations: That at this Time they cannot foresee what Claim might be given to those Nations by the explanatory Propositions³ from the Count de Vergennes on the 2^d & 3^d Articles of our Treaty of Amity & Commerce with His most Christian Majesty; but that he may be assured it will be our constant Care to place no People on more advantageous Ground than the Subjects of his Majesty.”

With great Respect I am, Sir, Your Excellency’s most obedient and most humble Servant.

B. FRANKLIN

His Ex^y the COUNT DE VERGENNES.

The French Minister and Secretary of State to the American Minister

[TRANSLATION]

VERSAILLES
9th September, 1784

SIR:

I have received the letter which you did me the honor to write me the third instant. You there declare in the name of Congress that the United States will be careful not to treat any other nation, in matters of commerce, more advantageously than the French nation. This declaration, founded on the treaty of the 6th February, 1778, has been very agreeable to the King; and you, Sir, can assure Congress that the United States shall constantly experience a perfect reciprocity in France.

I have the honor to be, etc.,

GRAVIER DE VERGENNES

³ For background, see 2 Miller 161.